

This Century

When we ask the question: What is the significance of anthroposophy and the anthroposophical movement in the present world? – we can take two points of view.

One point of view says: anthroposophy is one of the many little sects, of about 30,000 members, without influence on the happenings of the world; a sect, true, which has done some things – for instance, its members have founded schools and they teach children in a queer way.

There is another view. Spiritual reality does not reckon with quantity, but with quality – the quality of consciousness and the quality of will power. One man, thinking spiritual reality on one continent, is a light that radiates throughout the whole continent, just as when a candle is lit in a dark room and light reaches the whole room. When, on a certain continent, or in a big country, one or a few people think spiritual reality, then in a spiritual sense this part of the earth is not dark.

Spirituality, in this sense, is the quality of consciousness, and we can ask, when we speak about anthroposophy today: ‘Do we really have the quality of consciousness and the quality of will power which our time needs?’ Only absolute honesty and absolute modesty can give the answer.

Until 1500, mankind was led by the Hierarchies. All that happened till 1500 (Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy, told this to young teachers of the schools in 1922) were *repetitions of repetitions of repetitions*. What does that mean? It means that all those things which happened in the Greek and Roman culture, and in the Middle Ages, were still a repetition of things which had been brought to the world by the Hierarchies in previous periods. After 1500, said Steiner: ‘For the first time in the development of the earth, for the first time since the Saturn epoch, mankind is also responsible for the development and evolution of the universe. For the first time what happens – after 1500 – is not a repetition: it is new.’

This new element is the development of the *consciousness soul*.

Before 1500, in the early post-Atlantean periods, leaders of mankind were inspired by Hierarchical beings. These leaders were the half-gods of the ancient Greeks. Of Gilgamesh, too, it was said that he was one-third man, two-thirds god. That meant he was imbued by a Hierarchical being who acted through this leader as a leading force of mankind. Only after 1500 begins the leadership of man *by man*.

Steiner says that the great leader of the Sun mysteries from Atlantean times, Manu, was 'God-Manu', and that after 1500 there were to come 'human-Manu' – human leaders working out of the spiritual forces of the Sun mysteries.

This transition in 1500 is not recorded by modern history. On earth, for centuries, people have not been able to look into the reality of spiritual worlds. About 1500 the First Hierarchy entered the human world and gave to the physiology of man quite a new impulse. Till then, cosmic intelligence had lived in man and in the hearts of men in a different way. The old texts of the Kalevala or of Homer described gods who were near to men, so near that they went directly into the life of man and spoke to his heart and intelligence through the old mysteries. Knowledge was not only intellectual knowledge. Knowledge was something which filled the whole person and radiated out of the heart forces, something which was so one with man that he did not *have* the knowledge – he *was* the knowledge. It was *in* him – he *had* it not.

The First Hierarchy thus intervened in human development: the capacity to think, to have thoughts, moved from the heart to the brains. That is the starting point of personal intelligence.

The Archangel Michael had been trustee of the cosmic intelligence of the great Sun mysteries. Michael had always been the servant of the Sun mysteries. The old histories and the old sayings of the people record how, at certain points of history, Michael spoke and intervened in destiny. The leader of mankind's real development was always Michael. He incarnated into the leaders of old cultures.

The possibility to think and to have thoughts then moved from the heart, from the whole human being, which it had filled, to the brain – to the head. The intellect developed, and in a new way. Michael, so to speak, withdrew. Intelligence could be produced by human brains, now no longer necessarily inspired. As intelligence came to be produced by human beings, Ahriman could get a grip on human thinking. So long as cosmic thoughts

had lived in the hearts of people, Ahriman could not enter. The moment thinking went to the brains, Ahriman could enter and try to capture the thinking of man.

Another thing changed too. In the 19th letter of the *Letters to the Members*, Steiner writes that in nature there is always a surplus of young seed forces. When the plants come up in the spring there are more life forces than are needed for the growing of the plant. These surplus forces, radiating to the cosmos, are the young seed forces for the next cosmic situation, that of the coming Jupiter evolution. This is the situation in nature. After 1500, there is also a surplus in the will power of man, which radiates out along with these young seed forces. In man there is a surplus of will power, radiating into the cosmos, and this, too, will be part of the forces which form new cosmic creations.

Mankind is now co-operating in the creation of the coming worlds with his will forces, either by his spiritual will forces when it is done in a good way, or, in the wrong way, by his materialistic will forces. He is responsible now for what he wills. That is a new aspect of our present situation.

Steiner tells how thinking forces, in a sense, have died. They are shadows of thinking that lived in an earlier age. Even when we think about the reality of Saturn, Sun, Moon, and Earth development, all this remains dead when we know it only with our heads.

But will forces are a path for the earth's new upspringing life. Only where, knowing about spiritual realities and thinking about them, they engage the will, only then do these thoughts take on life.

Steiner put this in one sentence: 'The past, casting shadows, and the future, holding seeds of new reality, meet together in the being of man. Their meeting is the real human life of the present.'

There can, of course, be aberrations: one of only thinking and knowing; another of only willing, but having no spiritual content. Only where the spiritual content enters the will is the real human life of the present working. So we understand that mankind is now co-operating in the creation of the coming worlds through spiritual will forces. With our heads we can think spiritual conceptions, but from our heads these conceptions must enter into the will. And when I speak about the real situation of today, I would say: We must learn to *will*, to *will* in a spiritual way, to *will* with a spiritual content. What counts for the future of mankind is what we will, not the success of the

action. The will is what counts – the surplus of will forces as they radiate out into the cosmos. They become the seed forces for new worlds.

After 1500, Michael withdrew from mankind. He no longer held the connection with those thoughts which were produced by human brains, but he began to prepare for his coming in 1879 as the Time Spirit. This he did, preparing his mission in a cosmic school, where he once again brought great imaginations to those souls not yet incarnated but which would be on earth at the end of the 19th and during the 20th century. Once again he taught cosmic intelligence, for which he had been the trustee since Atlantean times. And it was the content of this school which Steiner introduced through anthroposophy.

Steiner, one of the leaders working out of the central forces of the mysteries of the Sun, had the task of introducing this cosmic intelligence on earth in the 20th century, in human words, and in human thinking, so that it might inspire human feeling and human willing.

Anthroposophy was presented first in the form of philosophy, as a way of inner development, and as a cosmology. Later it added insight into the New Testament, the four Gospels, and, after the First World War, the Michael wisdom was moulded into a school of esoteric learning as well. So we see:

- 1879 Michael takes up his task as the Time Spirit.
- 1899 the end of 5,000 years of darkness, of Kali-Yuga.
- 1900 beginning of a period of new light, a period when spiritual light could again flow to the earth.

We can observe Rudolf Steiner introducing this cosmic intelligence to the world in three steps – in three seven-year periods. Over the first period, from 1902–1909, Steiner introduces his *Philosophy of Freedom*, his *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* (which is the way of inner development), and *Theosophy*. This period ends with *Occult Science*, outlining the whole cosmology of our world.

From 1909–1916, the arts were developed – the renewal of movement in eurythmy, speech, and drama. In a short time Steiner wrote his four mystery dramas. He also threw new light on the four Gospels.

In 1917, Steiner introduced his concepts of the threefold form of man, and from 1917–1923 he worked out the structure of the threefold social order.

During the first seven years, anthroposophy was placed before the members as a great Imagination. For the second seven years anthroposophy was placed before the feeling forces, which could develop in art and in a renewal of religion.

In the third seven years Steiner reached into the will life to found a new education, new schools, a new movement for medicine, a new movement for bio-dynamic farming, and a new movement of the Threefold Commonwealth for social life.

At the end of 1923, it was possible for Steiner to celebrate the Christmas Foundation ceremony for the Anthroposophical Society, and in the Christmas Foundation, he introduced the renewed mysteries. That is to say, he introduced these mysteries into people's will. He then said: 'I myself, now, will go into this. I will join the Executive Committee, and I will take the chair. The Executive Committee will be a body for doing, for action, and for spiritual insight.' An initiative group, in other words: that means things had to be done – not only known, not only felt. Things have to be known, felt, and *done*.

This was the span of Rudolf Steiner's life in this century, as seen in retrospect.

Such seven-year rhythms live in the development of anthroposophy as a whole. There are such rhythms throughout cosmic development – the rhythm of day and night, of the year, of the sun passing through the zodiac. They are all rhythms written into the universe by the working of spiritual Hierarchies in past times of evolution. Now there is one new rhythm of development. That is the rhythm of $33\frac{1}{3}$ years – the rhythm between Christmas and the Easter that comes $33\frac{1}{3}$ years later. This is a new rhythm in the cosmos, a rhythm which was written by the life of Christ on earth. The life of Christ on earth meant that from that moment on, when Christ died at the first Easter, the rhythm of $33\frac{1}{3}$ years became a rhythm connected with all real Christian development. The old rhythms of days, years, and centuries are all realities, but new reality intersected earth life, caused by the life of Christ. Steiner, in one of his lectures, says that when something is done in the world and a new impulse is born, it is Christmas morning for this impulse. Then $33\frac{1}{3}$ years later, this impulse will have its Easter and its resurrection.

Whoever knows about this can find in his own life, and in the happenings of social life, the secret rhythm of $33\frac{1}{3}$ years. It works where the impulse is connected with the impulses of Christ working on the development of mankind.

We can note in this century, perhaps more than in previous times, the working of this rhythm. Steiner speaks of this: of the last third of the 19th century, and of the first third of the 20th century. Remember, 1900 began the new epoch of light. Kali-Yuga had ended. New light could flow to the earth. Steiner, in 1899, went through inner realities which gave him the possibility, and the task, of entering into the new century to introduce the imaginations of the Michael school as it had worked spiritually from 1500 onwards.

Now we can ask: 'What was the task of the new time, the 20th century, the beginning of the century of light?'

For one thing, that anthroposophy *as a whole* – and I take it now as a whole – should be introduced to mankind. Anthroposophy – a body of wisdom. We can say the seed was introduced of a new philosophy, a new science, a new art, and of a new religious renewal. These were seeds of new ways of inner development, seeds for the beginnings of new mysteries. This wisdom had to be studied. The small group which was with Rudolf Steiner was, of course, led not only by this wisdom; Lucifer tried to pervade this group also. Lucifer whispered to the members: 'You are the happy few. You know the truth. Shut yourselves away from the evil world. Study, and study for your *own* development and satisfaction.' This is the classic Luciferic approach. Anthroposophists versus *the outside world*. This expression, *the outside world*, is Luciferic jargon.

At Easter, 1933, the second third of the 20th century began. What was the greatest event of this second period? In 1911 and 1912 Steiner spoke about this great happening. He said that Christ had undergone a new crucifixion through the materialism of the 19th century. The materialism of the 19th century meant such suffering for Christ that it was for him a new crucifixion. Steiner also said that Christ would have a resurrection in the etheric world and appear as the etheric Christ between 1933 and 1935, and from then on, for future times. The appearance of the etheric Christ was the thing which had to happen in the middle third of this 20th century. People should be aware of it, should be prepared to encounter this happening. Now we realize how the forces of darkness did all they could to steer the minds of people on other paths. Shortly before this time, in January 1933, Hitler came to power. That is what happened; we know the results. They all stared at this man: 'What is happening?' 'What is he doing?' It was impossible then for people to go through

what was really happening in the world. The real happening was not in Germany at the beginning of 1933; what was really happening was that the etheric Christ was coming to mankind.

Can we, through Steiner, prepare to find the way to the etheric Christ? Steiner describes this preparation, saying that there are three steps which man must first go through, not only as knowledge, but in feeling – such strong inner feeling that man *becomes* this feeling. The first feeling is of the worthlessness of outer human existence. The second is the feeling of dissatisfaction with materialistic explanations. When we have studied anthroposophy for a long enough time, we may be deeply satisfied with the explanations given by anthroposophy. But this must be deepened more and more. Then the third step: the feeling of an inner split, inner duality. The feeling: 'My cosmic being, my cosmic ego, is great and radiant, while on earth I am only a dwarf. I am a cripple who cannot appear as my true being.' Steiner said the question arises in us: 'Who is posing me my own riddles? My own cosmic being, my own true ego!'

When people have gone through this deep dissatisfaction with all that is the outer world, it can result, Steiner said, in a new morality. The new morality is universal pity, compassion with all that suffers. He said that we should not be able to sleep at night so long as there is suffering in the world. Yet many of us have slept well many nights since.

Steiner said Christ would speak out of the grey depths of the spirit. Out of the grey depths of the spirit Christ would speak words of consolation. To be able to hear words of consolation, however, we must have a need to be consoled. The fact is that our normal outer feelings need no consoling. To feel this need we must have gone through the experience of the new morality: feel this universal pity, this compassion with all that suffers.

It was the task in the middle of our own century, as I see it, for anthroposophy to develop into a broad open movement reaching into the world, knowing about the world – not only with the head, but with the heart. Just as the study of anthroposophy means developing the quality of Imagination, so going through this deep feeling for the world, with an open mind, brings the real forces of Inspiration. Through anthroposophy in the second part of this century, a great many people should develop forces of Inspiration.

It is my opinion that we, and I say we, as a whole, have so far failed in this mission. We had not the force to be really awake in

that darkness to come to the etheric kingdom and to find there the Christ. Can anything be done now? In that time when all the forces of anthroposophy were to be awakened in the inner heart so that the etheric Christ could find people through whom to speak and work in the world, we went our egotistic ways. We fought and quarrelled with each other about books and about right methods. I am deeply ashamed when I look back upon this period. I must say all of us who were then in anthroposophy were involved, and we hadn't that force in us to really see what was happening in the world, and what was the task of the middle part of this century. Perhaps we can still do something. We can perhaps try to set aside egotistic quarrelling, living with our soul as an ear to the world, listening to people as we listen to a work of art, to a symphony or to a piece of Bach, so that that which is behind people reveals itself. And we can try to give answers out of our own compassion and our sympathy with the people of the world.

At Michaelmas 1966, we were entering the third and last part of the century. We can ask what will be the task of anthroposophy and of the people who could know, through it, about this last third of the century? Having studied anthroposophy as a cosmic wisdom, and having come to some Imagination, we can think through Steiner: 'When I can think through the cosmic development from Saturn to Sun to Moon to Earth, I am already in the world of Imagination, because these are pictures not taken from something that could be seen. They are inner pictures, and all inner pictures are the beginning of Imagination.'

We can live through a second step and try to come to Inspiration by living with people and with the world, receiving perhaps some consolation by way of Intuition. Through this we may know what to do in the encounter with Ahriman, and how to create young seed forces for the future. Steiner has told us that this last part of the century will be a very severe and difficult one. Ahriman will try to cast aside everything connected with spiritual science and with spiritual knowledge, and we will have to try to find the way in the world out of our own being.

Ahriman will try to eliminate the freedom of will given by the gods after 1500. Ahriman is preparing. He tries to eliminate the free will, and he does it in very clever ways. He does it by data processing, as we call it, by working with mechanical information, by research operations, and things like that.

What he is doing is trying to collect information and then

make a short cut from information to decision. He wants to tell us that, when such and such is the information, then we can only do this and that; all other ways are wrong.

But really coming to a decision means that we have to have Imagination, also for ourselves. *We* have to get the information, which means that we make a picture of the reality that we have to deal with. Then we have to develop consideration or sound judgement, which is an Inspirational force. *Then* we must come to a decision, already partly Intuition. It is in this middle step of sound judgement, of consideration, that the human being can be creative.

Creativity means that all things brought to us as information, as data, as facts, have to be interpreted and considered anew by our deepest forces. We have to take our decisions out of the conditions given at that moment. Then only will our judgement be strong enough to withstand Ahriman – when it comes of Inspiration, out of the spirit. Out of the spirit means for us out of the forces of the etheric Christ, who speaks words of consolation in the depths of our soul. Only now can that Intuition reach the will *for the deed*. When it does, we shall know what to do in the social field in which we are working and living.

In the last part of our century we have to enter these mysteries of the will.

We can live out of Intuition when we live as a group of people who are working together to accomplish an objective in the world. It can be a school, it can be an institute, it can be a farm. Steiner spoke of this in 1924, in the lectures which he held in Torquay, England, about initiate consciousness. He spoke about two ways of initiation: the old and the new way. The new way of initiation is that of Intuition, Intuition which can be found in a group of people who are working together. Steiner says that such a group must be a karmic group. Karma, not only from the past, but, as can also be the case, karma for the future. We build up a karmic group of people, with whom we were never together before, when together with these people we *will* something.

When such an Intuition springs up in a group of people working out of anthroposophy in the world, they must bring their good qualities and positive possibilities into the work, withdrawing their negative side from the group work. That negative side they must take into themselves and fight with in the loneliness of their own life. They must make the sacrifice of

not bringing the negative, personal things into the group work. This is a very difficult thing. The working group which is able to do this, even for only a short time, is able to live out of Intuition; it brings into the world those forces of germinating will which go into the future.

We shall have to do this, because we shall have to meet Ahriman in his own incarnation around the year 2,000. Steiner told us, in the last year of his life, that the great Aristotelians, Steiner himself included, would be back at this time. They will be able to give another direction to science. They will work together with the great Platonists, who are people of enormous will for the good in social life. Platonists are not people with feeble wills, and where this will is, it will be a will for good in the social life.

In this next, last part of the century, we must be able *to do* that which is good. We can know the truth and what is right. But knowing what is right is not the same as doing what is good. Something which is really truth to someone can be very bad at one moment, because the good is always relative, bound to a certain time, to certain environment.

In 1902 Steiner said in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* that one of the things we have to develop further is spiritual tact. With this spiritual tact we have to work in the coming years, doing the good according to the situations which we meet.

That doesn't mean in isolation and alone, but in social life, with other people.